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ABSTRACT

A study explored the storybook reading experiences between Ms. Garza and her children. A broad conception of the zone of proximal development, involving use, adaptation, and transformation of culturally shaped tools in the process of shared activity, provides the framework for examining this particular Mexican-American family's reading behavior. Data resulted from taping and transcribing storybook reading events during two periods, approximately 2 weeks in length, in the home. The Garzas represent many of the Latino immigrant families served by southern California urban public schools: low income; primarily Spanish-speaking parents; and children in a bilingual school program. The family actively supports their three elementary-age children's education. At the beginning of each taping period, the family was provided with various children's books in Spanish, from which they could choose freely. Several books related to their cultural heritage were included before the second taping. Grounded categories were developed representing the language functions in the first taping, and after transcription and coding data from the second taping, these grounded categories were confirmed and added to. Four categories of book reading interaction were elaborated: reading practice; adult-directed exchange; collaborative interpretation; and cultural transmission. The variety of interactions defies generalization. Findings reveal the key influence of content on the family's book-reading interaction. Data also reveal a process in which an immigrant family appropriates a tool from the host culture, infusing it with their own purposes and forms. The cultural activity which the Garzas engaged in during storybook reading suggests the need to locate shared activity within their sociocultural environment. Family literacy programs for diverse communities should be sensitive to families' sociocultural realities. (Contains 25 references, and "Categories of Language Functions" is appended.) (NKA)

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ED 418 383

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"Este libro es mi historia ": Mother-child interactions during storybook reading in a Mexican-American household

Ms. Garza's seven-year-old son Danny reads to his mother and his two siblings from Argentina Palacios' Sorpresa de Navidad para Chabelita (1994). In the story Chabelita and her grandfather walk to the post office in a Panamanian village: "-Buenos días, Don Ernesto. Buenos días, Chabelita- decían las personas con quienes se encontraban en el camino. Don Ernesto y Chabelita siempre contestaban los saludos." ("Buenos días, Don Ernesto. Buenos días, Chabelita," the people said along the way. Grandpa and Chabelita always answered all the greetings.)

Ms. Garza, the text resonating deeply with her experience growing up in a village in Durango, Mexico, elaborates on the passage:

> ¡Que bueno! Esa es la forma que uno, cuando uno está en los pueblos pequeños, se acostumbra saludar a todas las personas. -¿Como está?, buenos días, buenas tardes, buenas noches-. Es un, una forma muy bonita de convivir con todas las personas porque todas se conocen. Es diferente que en la ciudad. (How nice! That is the way that one, when one is in the village, becomes accustomed to greeting everyone. "How are you? Good morning. Good afternoon. Good evening." It is a very beautiful way of sharing life with everyone, because everyone knows one another. It is different in the city.)

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Lily, age five, responds inquisitively, "Mami, pero, ¿qué, qué pasa si no los saludan?" (Mami, what happens if you don't greet someone?)

Maria's reply openly expresses her desire to transmit the valued cultural tradition evoked by the story:

> Pues, se siente triste la persona porque si, se conoce y se convive diario. Tú pasas, por ejemplo, tú cuando pasas siempre saludas a la Señora Judy. Y cuando no le saludas, le pregunta, -¿oye nena, porqué a mí no me saludó? Está enojada conmigo?- porque está acostumbrada que tú le saludas. Y así, en el campo los campesinos están acostumbrados. Es una costumbre de la cultura de nosotros, los latinos, de saludarnos. Y quisiera que así fueran Uds. también. (Well, the person feels sad because you know each other and you live together daily. You, for example, always greet Mrs. Judy when you see her. And, when you don't greet her, she asks, "Why didn't you greet me? Are you mad at me?" because she is accustomed to you greeting her. It is the same for the people in the countryside. It is a custom of our culture, the Latinos, to greet one another. I wish that you all would do the same as well.)

This exchange, taken from three hours of recorded book reading between Ms. Garza and her children, presents an intriguing engagement with the text. However, much of the recorded interaction does not reverberate with such personal response or complex cultural content. This study explores the diverse storybook reading experiences of one Mexican American family, a diversity which suggests several factors which may influence non white-non middle class families' ways of interacting with text.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Storybook Reading in Diverse Communities

Researchers have often described the important role book reading plays in children's early literacy development and in their performance in school literacy activities (Heath, 1982; Teale, 1984; Wells, 1986). Studies have revealed the role of storybook reading in children's early language acquisition (Bruner & Ninio, 1978; Panofsky, 1994; Snow & Goldfield, 1983) and the assumptions about print and orientations toward literacy which are passed on to children through participation in adult-child book reading (Cochran-Smith, 1984; Snow & Ninio, 1986).

Research also reveals storybook reading as a culturally-specific activity. Heath (1982) proposes that "the ways of taking" information from text vary across cultures and social classes. Comparing the storybook reading of lower- and middle-class Anglo families, she concluded that the parents mediated storybook interactions with children in qualitatively different ways. Unlike their middle-class counterparts, the lower-class parents in the study did not "carry on or sustain in continually overlapping and interdependent fashion the linking of ways of

taking meaning from books to ways of relating that knowledge to other aspects of the environment" (71). Heath points out how this difference disadvantaged the children from the lower-class homes in school literacy activities requiring an active interpretative stance. In a study of the home literacy environments of lower-class African American, Latino and non-Latino Caucasian children, Teale (1986) found that ethnicity failed to predict the amount or type of home literacy activity. However, he mentions that taped storybook readings from the study support Heath's conclusion regarding differences in interaction styles.

Thus, it appears that even where family book reading occurs, the benefits for future success in school literacy do not accrue equally for all children. However, Auerbach (1989) sharply critiques deficit-oriented assumptions which undergird family literacy programs that promote diverse communities' use of mainstream "ways with words." Cautioning against efforts to transmit school practices to home contexts and in the process mold culturally diverse parents "to conform to school-determined expectations," she outlines a broad "social-contextual model of family literacy" which aims "to increase the social significance of literacy in family life by incorporating community cultural forms and social issues into the content of literacy activities" (177). The sociocultural awareness

underlying this model suggests a heuristic perspective from which to examine the vignette at the opening of this paper. An elucidation of the role of cultural activity in such an interaction requires a sociocultural perspective sensitive to unique cultural histories, contextual realities, and family goals.

A Sociocultural Perspective on Family Book Reading

Contemporary interpretations of Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development support and extend a sociocultural perspective on family storybook reading. Vygotsky's (1978) conception of the social origins of cognition has frequently been applied to adult-child storybook reading (Cochran-Smith, 1984; Deloache, 1984; Edwards & Garcia, 1994; Panofsky, 1989, 1994). These scholars have emphasized that constructing meaning from the storybook text represents a collaborative undertaking in which the child's understanding is mediated by the adult. This mediation occurs within the zone of proximal development, the region between what a child can accomplish independently and what she or he can accomplish with assistance from a more competent other (Vygotsky, 1978).

While these studies highlight the social origin of cognitive functions through the internalization of adult-child interactions, neo-Vygotskian

scholars (Cole, 1985; Moll & Whitmore, 1994; Rogoff, Mosier, Mistry, & Artin, 1994) offer broader interpretations of Vygotsky's concept which emphasize the influence of sociocultural values, semiotic systems, and societal institutions on all shared activity. Rogoff et al. (1994), elaborating on Cole's (1985) suggestion that culture and cognition create one another within the zone of proximal development, states:

> Interactions in the zone of proximal development are the crucible of development and of culture in that they allow children to participate in activities that would be impossible for them alone, using cultural tools that themselves must be adapted to the specific activity at hand and thus are both passed along to and transformed by new generations. (232)

This broad conception of the zone of proximal development, involving the use, adaptation, and transformation of culturally-shaped tools in the process of shared activity, provides the framework in which I will discuss the diverse storybook reading of one Mexican American immigrant family.

METHODS

Participants

The data for this study resulted from the taping and transcribing of storybook reading events which occurred in the Garza home. Maria Garza immigrated from rural Mexico to the United States more than a decade ago.

She met her husband Santos, an immigrant from Mexico City, married, and had three children, German (age 9), Danny (age 7), and Lily (age 5) in Southern California. I chose the Garza family for the study for several reasons. First, they represent many of the Latino immigrant families served by the public schools in urban Southern California in several ways: 1) they subsist on a poverty-level income; 2) both parents speak very little English; and, 3) the children participate in a bilingual program at a local public elementary school. Second, as the former kindergarten teacher of the oldest boy, I knew that the family actively supported the children's education and that the two older boys had been successful students in the early elementary school years. Therefore, I anticipated the opportunity to discover positive, culturally-specific forms of interaction in the book reading of Maria and the children. Finally, the age sequence of the three Garza children provided an opportunity to observe if and how María adjusted her interaction strategies according to her children's age differences.

Data collection and analysis

The family recorded their storybook events during two periods approximately two weeks in length. At the beginning of each period I

provided the family with a variety of children's fiction and non-fiction books in Spanish. I emphasized that they were free to choose what and when they wanted to read. However, in order to compare Maria's interactions with each of her children, I asked that she read alone with each child. The family taped six or seven stories during each recording period.

After the first taping period, I transcribed the recordings and began to develop grounded categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) representing the language functions occurring in the exchanges between Ms. Garza and the children. During this analysis I recognized the influence of the content of the books on the Garzas' interactions. Therefore, I intentionally included several books related to their cultural heritage in the set I provided for the second taping period. I also found that after initially reading alone with the two youngest children, Ms. Garza chose to read with all three children together. For the second period, I stated that they were free to determine the participant structure of all their book reading events.

After transcribing and coding the data from the second taping period, I confirmed and added to the language functions identified in the first recording session. These functions are described in Appendix 1.

Having coded the exchanges from both recording sessions, I then created the following four general categories of book reading interaction: 1) reading practice, 2) adult-directed exchange, 3) collaborative interpretation, and 4) cultural transmission. I identified three key properties of these interactions: book content, participant structure, and language use. After thorough analysis of the transcripts, I visited Ms. Garza in order to share my results and to seek her insight on the interactions. Finally, as I began to prepare this report of the research, I translated important exchanges into English. These translations were corroborated by several Spanish-English bilingual teachers.

FINDINGS

Analysis of the transcripts of the book reading events produced four categories of interactions involving María and her children. I will now describe these categories and the book content, participant structures and language use which define them.

Reading Practice. Reading practice involved Danny or German reading relatively uninterrupted to their mother. Typically, the dyad only interacted when María corrected occasional reading miscues or one of the

boys asked about a problematic word. In each case of reading practice the text read was unrelated to the family's particular cultural history or prior knowledge.

Adult-directed Exchange. In adult-directed exchanges Maria initiated interaction in order to involve a child in the book reading and to ensure and evaluate literal comprehension. Nearly all such interaction occurred when Ms. Garza read books to Lily that had little relation to their personal experience or prior knowledge. A typical adult-directed exchange occurred as Maria called Lily's attention to a photograph of the stars while reading El sol siempre brilla en alguna parte (Fowler, 1992):

> Maria: ¿Qué son éstas? (What are those?)
> Lily: Estrellas. (Stars.)
> Maria: ¿Y dónde están? (And where are they?)
> Lily: Allá en el cielo. (There in the sky.)
> Maria: ¿Y te qustan? (And do you like them?)
> Lily: Sí (Yes.)

During the reading of this information book, Maria produced nearly seventy percent of the total speech-turns. While displaying a variety of language functions, including semantic questions, life-to-text connections, and explanations, Maria most often relied upon label and "do you like" questions to initiate exchanges. Correspondingly, Lily produced more labels than any other type of utterance. The fact that Lily asked no

questions during the entire book underscores the adult-directed nature of the interaction.

Collaborative interpretation. In this category of interaction the Garzas wove together prior knowledge and experience with textual information to produce socially-constructed interpretations. Collaborative interpretation occurred only when Maria and the three children read together and the text touched upon their unique prior knowledge. As the participants sought, confirmed, questioned, and built upon one another's comments, they exhibited no standard format of speech turns and utilized a wide variety of language functions. Significantly, the label and "do you like" questions common in adult-directed interactions disappeared completely, and the use of life-to-text comments increased.

A representative example of collaborative interpretation occurred while Maria read Veloz como el grillo (Wood, n.d.) to the three children. Throughout the book the children called out the names and discussed the appearances of the animals pictured on each page. However, when the text referred to bees, the discussion intensified, bouncing from one enthusiastic participant to the next:

> Maria reading: "Y trabajador como la abeja." (as hard-working as a bee.)
> Lily: ¡Ay! No me gustan ésas. (I don't like those!)

Maria: Mira, las abejas llegan así a cada florecita, y sacan de allí para, el, el, el... ¿Cómo se llama, hijo? (Look, the bees visit each flower and take out the, the... What is it called, *hijo*?)

German: El... (The...)

Maria: Polen? (Pollen?)

German: Uh-hu, polen. (Uh-hu. Pollen.)

Maria: El polen para hacer la miel. Mmmm. (The pollen to make honey. Mmm.)

Lily: Pero no me gustan porque ésos pican. (But, I don't like them because they sting.)

Danny: ¿Mami, verdad... (Mami, is it true...)

German: Mami, el polen. También el polen cuando ellos van en el aire con el polen en su cuerpo, se la cayen y donde caigan crecen más flores. ¿Sabía? (Mami, the pollen. Also, the pollen, when they go in the air with the pollen on their bodies, and it falls, where it falls more flowers grow. Did you know that?)

Maria: No, mijo, no sabía. Mira, que lindas. A mí, me gustan éstas. En mi casa mi papa tenía muchas de estas, abejas. Y sacábamos mucha miel. (No, I didn't know that. Look, how pretty they are. I like these. In my house my dad had a lot of bees and we collected a lot of honey.)

Danny: Mami, mami, ¿sabía que las abejas, estas. Mami verdad que si no trabajaban las abejas no había miel? (Mami, mami, did you know that the bees, these... Mami, is it true that if they didn't work, there wouldn't be any honey?)

Maria: No, no había miel. (No, there wouldn't be any honey.)

As each participant brought prior knowledge to this portion of the text, a rapid give-and-take discussion occurred which differed qualitatively from the rest of those involving Veloz como el grillo. The participants made frequent life-to-text connections, confirmed one another's responses, and expanded upon the others' comments. Such interaction resulted in a socially-constructed interpretation which linked the text to the Garzas' prior experience and knowledge.

Cultural Transmission. Cultural transmission took place when a text evoked traditions from the Garzas' Mexican cultural heritage and Maria highlighted, elaborated upon, and attempted to transmit these elements to her children. Such interactions occurred only while Maria and the three children read together and frequently involved interwoven discussion among all the participants. However, several features distinguished cultural transmission from collaborative interpretation. First, the text often prompted the creation of an imagined world in which Maria made tangible cultural traditions no longer consistently visible in the family's urban environment. Second, Maria's language use expanded and became more emotive as she provided detailed elaborations, value statements, and didactic declarations. Third, the Garzas identified themselves with the characters in the text. Fourth, they used the text to critique and inform activities in their daily lives.

The first instance of cultural transmission appeared in the vignette opening this paper involving Sorpresa de Navidad para Chabelita, a story describing many aspects of village life. Elaborating on the main characters' action of greeting others, Maria invoked an imagined village world in which one "becomes accustomed to greeting everyone." In response to Lily's question about the custom, Maria then provided an

example from the family's actual world in the city. Finally, locating the family within the larger Latino cultural universe, Maria urged the children to uphold the tradition of greeting others. In the course of this interaction Maria offered both a highly emotive value statement, "una forma muy bonita de convivir con todas las personas" (a very beautiful way of sharing life with everyone), and a didactic declaration, "Y quisiera que así fueran Uds. también." (I wish that you all would do the same.)

Other instances of cultural transmission occurred as Maria and the children read the bilingual book Family Pictures/Cuadros de familia (Garza, 1990) The book portrays, in text and illustrations, the author's life as a young girl growing up in a small Latino community in rural Texas. Each page evoked traditions from Maria's rural Mexican heritage, and she elaborated on topics such as piñatas, picking nopales, the Virgen of San Juan, and folk medicine. A particularly lengthy interaction involving all four of the distinct characteristics of cultural transmission occurred as the family responded to the author's depiction of the town fair in Reynoso, Mexico:

> Maria: Esto, esto lo que ves aquí hijo, esto es lo auténtico, lo auténtico mexicano. Lo que se hacen en los pueblos. (This, what you see here, is the authentic Mexican way of life! What is done in the villages.)
> German: Oh.

Maria: Mire, mijo este niño aquí, éste está tomando su soda. ¡Que lindo! Esto, esto es mi vida. Esto. Yo quisiera que la amaran como yo la amo. (Look, mijo, this boy is drinking his soda. How beautiful. This, this is my life. This. I wish that you would love it as I love it!)

Maria first acknowledged and entered the imagined world of the Mexican village called forth by the story. She then responded emotively to the subjects portrayed in the text and attempted to transmit a deep value of the family's heritage to the children. As the Garzas' response continued, they identified themselves with the characters portrayed in the illustrations and thus actively transported themselves into the text:

Maria: ¡Allí está Lily! [Laughs] (There is Lily!)
Lily: Mami, ¿Ud. está ésta? Mi mamá ésta, mi papi es éste, y yo soy ésta, y German éste, y Danny éste. (Mami, are you this one? My mami is this one, my papi is this one, here am I, and German this one, and Danny this one.)
German: ¡Aquí está Danny! (Here's Danny!)
Lily: ¿El chiquitito? (The little one?)

Finally, in one of many text-to-life connections, Maria used the text to inform the Garzas' activities in their actual world.

Maria: Esto, esto es lo que quisiéramos hacer para 5 de mayo, para festejar como es en reálidad una fiesta, una feria mexicana. ¿Te recuerdas este papél que está picado, como los que Uds. hicieron en la escuela? ¿Cuando el Sr. Manyak, bailó el jarabe tapatío todo esto? Esto es lo que quisiéramos hacer en la escuela. (This, this is what wanted to do for Cinco de Mayo, to celebrate like a true Mexican festival. Do you remember this cut paper, like you made in school. And, when Mr. Manyak danced the Jarabe Tapatío ? This is what we wanted to do in the school.)

The children also actively brought prior knowledge to bear on the cultural traditions described by the text. A page picturing a piñata party produced interaction typical of the collaborative interpretation described earlier. After Maria explained how piñatas are made in Mexico, German described another process of making piñatas:

> German: ¿Mami, sabía Ud. como hacen las piñatas? Hacen un globo bien grande. Luego lo llenan de papel de periódico con mucho pegamento. Lo secan. Luego lo ponen lo demás, y luego lo pintan y lo dejan a secar. Luego se explota el... (Mami, do you know how they make the piñatas? They make a big balloon. Then they cover it with newspaper with a lot of glue. Then, they dry it. Later they put the other stuff, they paint it, and they let it dry. Then the, the...)
> Danny: Globo. (Balloon).
> German: El globo, y luego hacen un hoyo y meten los dulces y allí está. (balloon explodes. Then they make a hole and put the candy in and it's done.)
> Maria: ¿Quién te dijo esto? (Who told you that?)
> German: En un libro el año pasado. Lo leí; estaba así. (A book from last year. I read that it was like that.)

German's statement represents an intertextual connection in which he adds information from a book he had read the previous school year to the discussion and to the family's growing knowledge of their cultural history.

At the conclusion of Family Pictures/Cuadros de familia, Maria offered an emotional evaluation which epitomizes her deeply personal responses throughout the book:

Maria: ¡Este libro es precioso! De todos los libros que he leído, éste es él que me ha gustado más. (This book is precious! Of all the books that I have read, this is the one I like the most.)

Lily: A mí también. (Me too.)

Maria: Esta, este libro es mi historia.... No es tan real, porque no sé dibujar. Pero, ésta era mi vida. (This book is my story.... It is not real because I don't know how to draw. But, this was my life.)

Hinting at the possible legacy of this shared storybook reading event, Maria then asked the children to buy her a copy of Family Pictures/Cuadros de familia when they grew older.

DISCUSSION

I began exploring the storybook reading of a culturally and linguistically diverse family with the intention of identifying culturally-specific forms of book reading interaction which could be compared to "mainstream" adult-child storybook reading. However, the variety of the interactions described above defies generalization. Instead, the findings unveil the key influence of content on the family's book-reading interaction. The data also reveal a process in which an immigrant family appropriates a tool from the host culture, infusing it with their own

purposes and forms. I will now discuss these findings in light of the sociocultural perspective developed earlier.

Content and Book Reading Interaction

"Funds of knowledge" research (Moll & Greenberg, 1990), in which researchers and teachers enter language minority students' homes as ethnographic observers, has documented the vast socially-distributed knowledge and resources possessed by culturally diverse families. The data from this study highlight the influence of such unique knowledge on family storybook reading. When dealing with textual content unrelated to the family's funds of knowledge or cultural heritage, the Garzas' book reading involved either reading practice or adult-directed exchanges in which Maria attempted to elicit her children's participation in the book reading event and to ensure their literal comprehension of the text. During these interactions Maria frequently relied on simple labeling and "do you like" questions which prompted one word responses.

When the book did relate to the Garzas' funds of knowledge, the family exhibited interpretive behavior which involved the linking of prior knowledge to the text and of information from the text to their own experience. In the example presented in the findings, the Garzas, while

reading about bees, engaged in collaborative interpretation which featured not only these book-life linkages, but also a linking of the participants' responses to create socially-constructed meanings. The interpretative work exhibited in these interactions, involving the "cooperative negotiation of meaning from books," resembles the mainstream community's "way of taking" described by Heath (1982).

Texts which presented valued customs from Maria's rural Mexican heritage elicited the Garzas' most original book reading interactions. Through the imagined worlds created by these texts Maria pointed out, elaborated on, and sought to transmit cultural traditions to children being raised in a street-corner apartment in urban America. The interactions surrounding these periods of cultural transmission frequently involved both life-to-text and text-to-life connections and were uniquely flavored by Maria's elaborations, value statements, and didactic declarations. Thus, during periods of cultural transmission, Maria modeled a powerful personal response to literature for her children.

Appropriation of a Cultural Tool

A shift in the goals of the Garzas' storybook reading accompanies the change in the nature of their interactions and signals an appropriation

of the activity for their own purpose. The Garzas' first book reading events involved texts unrelated to their funds of knowledge and a dyadic participant structure prescribed by the researcher. Although reading practice and adult-directed interactions occurred during these events, the family's primary goal appeared to be to comply with a researcher-friend's request to record book reading interaction. However, when the texts presented valued cultured traditions from the family's rural Mexican heritage, Maria imbued the book reading with the authentic goal of transmitting cultural behaviors and knowledge. As the Garzas pursued this new purpose, they established a comfortable communal participant structure and their interactions took on the new forms of collaborative interpretation and cultural transmission.

In documenting the experience of African American children learning to write in an urban elementary school classroom, Dyson (1993) describes two processes by which the children connected "unofficial" social worlds with the "official" world of the classroom. Dyson's subjects "staked a claim" on official classroom curriculum by "infusing it with *un*official generic material" (136) from their sociocultural worlds and engaged in "making inroads" by using official school activities to accomplish their purposes in unofficial social worlds. Dyson's conceptions elucidate

comparable processes in the Garzas' appropriation of family book reading. When reading texts portraying relevant cultural traditions, Maria made an inroad by using the "official" activity of storybook reading given to her by the researcher to carry out a genuine cultural task. In the process of making this inroad, Maria and the children also "staked a claim" on the activity of storybook reading, infusing it with new language functions and a new participant structure.

At the conclusion of her study, Dyson (1993) emphasizes that in order for children to connect official and unofficial worlds, the curriculum must be permeable enough to allow for staking claims and making inroads. Such permeability, fostered by the provision of Spanish-language books with relevant cultural content and the sanctioning of diversity in participant structure and language use, also appeared necessary for the Garzas' appropriation of storybook reading.

From Guided Participation to Didactic Instruction

In a broad conception of the zone of proximal development, shared activity is influenced by many sociocultural factors. The cultural activity which the Garzas engaged in during storybook reading suggests the need to locate this activity within their sociocultural environment. In developing

the concept of guided participation, Rogoff et al. (1994) state that children around the world develop values and skills primarily through participation in shared communal activities. This form of guided participation contrasts with the "didactic instruction" given to children segregated "from opportunities to observe and participate in important cultural activities" (230). This perspective on guided participation raises questions about the enculturation of immigrant children growing up outside of their communities of origin. Discontinuity between native and immigrant settings may inhibit the use of traditional vehicles for passing on cultural behavior and values.

The Garza children, growing up in an urban neighborhood in Southern California, are far removed from a setting in which they might unconsciously take on certain behaviors common in a rural Mexican village through participation in ubiquitous community activities. Thus, the cultural transmission Maria engaged in during book reading represents a transition, necessitated by changing sociocultural milieus, from guided participation to the use of didactic instruction. While this study has documented how the Garzas' appropriation of the event of storybook reading infused the activity with new functions and forms, I can only speculate that their use of a new tool in the transmission of culture

traditions will change the traditions being transmitted. Thus, the Garzas' shared book reading appears to be a vivid example of the crucible in which culture and cognition create each other through the adaptation of cultural tools in shared problem solving (Cole, 1985).

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

As an exploration of the storybook reading in a culturally and linguistically diverse family, this study offers several implications to researchers and practicioners concerned with storybook reading and family literacy in diverse communities. First, storybook reading research undertaken with diverse populations must recognize the influence of unique cultural experiences and funds of knowledge on book reading interaction. Ways of interacting with text depend upon the participants' association with the content.

Second, family literacy programs for diverse communities should, as Auerbach's (1989) social-contextual model suggests, be sensitive to families' sociocultural realities. While they may facilitate the use of mainstream literacy practices such as storybook reading, programs should be permeable enough to allow families to adapt both the goals and forms

of such activities. Based on the data from this study, supplying books in native languages which evoke valued cultural traditions and allowing families to establish contexts for reading based on familiar participant structures appear to be important means of creating such permeability.

Third, for immigrant families no longer able to pass on particular traditions and behaviors through the guided participation common in native settings, the sharing of picture books presenting these elements may serve as an important tool for cultural transmission. Such books allowed the Garza family to enter into an imagined world in which important traditions were identified, elaborated upon, suffused with value, and connected to the family's real world. Thus, while the use of multicultural literature in classrooms has obvious benefits, the true power of such texts may best be unlocked by adults who share the cultural heritage portrayed in the books. Teachers, researchers and parents should collaborate in creating programs in which culturally-diverse parents enter the classrooms to share multicultural literature with the students or in which families read books containing relevant cultural themes at home.

Finally, this study supports a broadly-conceived interpretation of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. While the adult-child

interaction in storybook reading frequently has been interpreted in light of the zone of proximal development, the complex and evolving cultural activity involved in the book reading in this study requires a broader conception of the zone which, in Rogoff et al.'s (1994) words:

> ...considers the societal basis of the shared problem solving-the nature of the problem the partners seek to solve, the values involved in determining the appropriate goals and means, the intellectual tools available ... and the institutional structures of the interaction...." (232)

While viewing the Garzas' book reading from a sociocultural perspective, this study made no effort to describe the family's full range of literacy activity. Thus, the family's storybook reading cannot be contextualized within their literacy history or their ongoing literacy use. More thoroughgoing ethnographic research on diverse families' literacy use might provide a better context in which to interpret storybook reading events, their relation to other literacy activities, and their long-term influence on the evolving culture and cognition of the participants.

CONCLUSION

While engaged in this study I continually reflected on my relationship with the Garza family from the perspective of the "social

distribution of cultural resources" (Moll, Tapia, & Whitmore, 1993). During the five years in which our friendship revolved around participation in the same elementary school community, I became a part of the Garzas' funds of knowledge. Frequently the family sought my knowledge in order to negotiate the complex school world. After leaving the school I approached the family seeking their participation in this study. They complied without reservation, and we began the project. However, as I transcribed the Garzas' first taped book readings, I became concerned that in my new role as a researcher I had imposed an orthodox literacy activity on the family.

However, when I witnessed the Garza family appropriate storybook reading for their own purpose, I realized that I had underestimated their resourcefulness. They did not passively receive the tool passed on to them, but transformed it in accordance with their goals and sociocultural realities. Like the families described by Moll et al. (1993), the Garzas were "*active* in coping with, in changing, indeed, in mediating the very conditions under which they live" (140). In the end, the Garzas' appropriation of storybook reading not only fostered the transmission of valued cultural traditions and provided a powerful model of reader-response for the children, but also mediated my changing relationship to

the family, easing discomfort as I approached them in a new and unfamiliar role and paving the way for continuing beneficial exchanges in the future.

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APPENDIX 1

Categories of Language Functions

In constructing the following categories and subcategories I began by using the scheme of language functions delineated by Panofsky (1994) in her study of parent-child book reading. When utterances failed to fit easily into one of the functions she describes, I created a new category. Other studies on language functions during book reading informed these new categories (Cochran-Smith, 1984; Snow, 1993).

A. Interactionals
   1. *Attentionals* served to orient the attention of other participants.

B. Questions
   1. *Label questions* attempted to elicit labels for objects pictured in the text.
   2. *"Do you like" questions* prompted cursory personal evaluations of textual subjects.
   3. *Semantic questions* involved an attempt to seek clarification or elaboration of the meaning of the text.
   4. *Decoding questions* involved the reader seeking help decoding text.

C. Text Extensions
   1. *Labels* identified objects pictured in illustrations.
   2. *Explanations* attempted to clarify the meaning of the text.
   3. *Elaborations* provided additional information related to but beyond the content of the text.
   4. *Life-to-text connections* involved bringing information from life experiences to the text.
   5. *Text-to-life connections* involved taking information from the text to inform or critique real-life actions.
   6. *Value statements* ascribed value to textual actions or objects in the text.
   7. *Didactic declarations* sought to transmit cultural behaviors or values evoked by the text.

D. Feedback
   1. *Confirmations* verified others responses.
   2. *Corrections* revised faulty responses or reading miscues.
   3. *Expansions* added information to a previous response.